

Service Area Plan

Department of Veterans' Services

Veterans Care Center Operations (43013)

Service Area Background Information

Service Area Description

The Care Center Services section operates the Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC), a 240-bed long-term care facility located in Roanoke.

Service Area Alignment to Mission

This Service Area directly aligns with and supports the Department of Veterans Services mission of serving Virginia's veterans by providing health care and comfort to veterans in a clean and safe environment.

Service Area Statutory Authority

Title 2.2, Chapter 20, § 2.2-2000 through 2.2-2004 of the Code of Virginia provides for the operation of the Virginia Veterans Care Center under the Department of Veterans Services.

The Virginia Veterans Care Center is comprised of a 180-bed Skilled Nursing Facility and a 60-bed Assisted Living Facility, operated under licenses from the Virginia Department of Health and the Virginia Department of Social Services, respectively.

Service Area Customer Base

Customer(s)	Served	Potential
Assisted Living (Domiciliary Care) - measured in hours of care	20,558	21,900
Nursing Care - measured in hours of care	61,292	65,700

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Anticipated Changes In Service Area Customer Base

The Virginia Veterans Care Center measures the number of customers served and service capacity in terms of "patient days." A patient day is one patient occupying a bed at the VVCC for one day. Service capacity is measured in this way because the VVCC experiences a continuous turnover of patients. While some patients may stay in the VVCC for several months, other patients may only stay in the VVCC for a few days. The patient day measure provides a quantifiable measure of actual vs. potential service capacity of the VVCC.

With 240 beds, the VVCC has a capacity of 87,600 patient days (240 beds X 365 days = 87,600). The nursing care units, with 180 beds, have a potential capacity of 65,700 patient days, while the assisted living unit, with 60 beds, has a potential capacity of 21,900 patient days.

The nursing care units provided a total of 61,292 patient days of care in FY05, meaning that over 93% of the nursing care unit's capacity (61,292 ÷ 65,700) was achieved in FY05. On an average day, 168 out of 180 beds were in use.

The assisted living unit provided a total of 20,558 patient days of care in FY05, meaning that over 94% of the assisted living unit's capacity (20,558 ÷ 21,900) was achieved in FY05. On an average day, 54 out of 60 beds were in use.

The Commonwealth currently has a service capacity of 240 beds – all of it at the Virginia Veterans Care Center. As Virginia's only state-owned and operated veterans care center, the VVCC serves veterans from across the Commonwealth, but draws the majority of its residents from within 50 miles of the Roanoke area. The planned construction of a new veterans care center in Richmond and the possible construction of a veterans care center in Hampton Roads have the potential to triple the capacity of Virginia's veterans care centers to 720 beds in the next decade.

Options to provide nursing care and assisted living care to more of Virginia's veterans include:

- Increasing the service capacity of the VVCC
- Constructing new veterans care centers in other parts of the Commonwealth
- Encouraging the federal government to fund the construction and operation of additional federally-operated skilled care and long-term care facilities in Virginia
- Lobbying the federal government for increased funding for care of veterans at private skilled care or long-term care facilities

The department is already pursuing the second course of action. Construction will begin in 2005 on the Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC), on the grounds of the McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond. The SBVCC will open in 2007 as a 160-bed skilled care facility. Originally planned for 240 beds, 80 beds had to be cut due to mounting construction costs. The department will request funding from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) to cover 65% of the project costs to restore the 80 beds. The Commonwealth of Virginia has already authorized a treasury loan in the amount of \$2.8 million to cover the state's 35% share of the \$8 million addition.

The 2005 General Assembly authorized \$50,000 to conduct a planning study on a third veterans care center in the Hampton Roads area. The department has requested funding approval for a third care center as part of its 2006-2012 Capital Budget request. As noted above, the construction of a new care center is contingent upon the receipt of federal funding for 65% of the project costs. The state is responsible for the remaining 35%.

Title 38, Chapter 1, Part 59, Section 59.40 of the Code of Federal Regulations states that Virginia may apply for federal grant money – 65% of construction costs – to build/operate veterans care center facilities with a maximum of 1,312 total beds. If the number of existing beds (240 – at the VVCC), planned beds (240 – at the

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SBVCC), and potential beds (240 – at a care center in Hampton Roads) are subtracted from the 1,312 maximum, then Virginia would still have a potential shortfall of 592 beds.

Building a new veterans care center is dependent on more than the maximum number of allowed beds or on the availability of construction money. New care centers must serve a large enough market to be economically viable. In other words, they must be located such that there are a sufficient number of veterans living in close enough proximity to the care center to maintain the occupancy rate needed for cost-efficient service delivery. In addition, placing new care centers in close proximity to VA Medical Centers greatly facilitates access to the VA Health Care system, and allows for some cost savings through shared services (laundry, food preparation, etc.). There are three VA Medical Centers in Virginia, in Hampton, Richmond, and Salem.

Service Area Products and Services

- The Virginia Veterans Care Center provides long term care and rehabilitation to honorably discharged veterans in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Specific services include:
 - **Assisted Living Services:**
Provides care for residents needing assistance with a limited number of activities of daily living, medication administration, and/or monitoring of behavior patterns.
 - **Nursing Care Services:**
Provides care for residents needing assistance with multiple activities of daily living, administration of medication and treatments by a licensed nurse, and monitoring of behavior or changes in medical condition.
 - **Skilled Care Services:**
Provides care for residents requiring daily observation or treatment by a licensed nurse, physical therapist, occupational therapist, or speech language therapist.
 - **Alzheimer's/Dementia Care Services:**
Provides safe supportive environment for residents with dementia who also require nursing care services. The care environment is designed to allow wandering within the unit and outside wandergarden but prevent elopement.

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Factors Impacting Service Area Products and Services

- Resident Census

While the Virginia Veterans Care Center draws clients from across the Commonwealth, the majority of VVCC residents are admitted from the Salem VA Medical Center, adjacent to the VVCC, and from hospitals in the Roanoke area. The VVCC must maintain strong ties with veterans service organizations and strive to establish an ongoing public awareness to ensure that veterans not only become aware of VVCC services, but also to ensure that the families of the veterans are knowledgeable about this health care resource available to their veteran family member.

Admissions are dependant to a large degree on the rate and length of stay in area hospitals. Of the discharges from the hospitals, only discharged patients who are honorably discharged veterans residing in Virginia are considered for admission to the VVCC. Care Center residents requiring hospitalization must be discharged from the VVCC, but care and consideration is made to try to readmit these former VVCC residents following their hospital stay.

Given that the Virginia Veterans Care Center does not receive a General Fund appropriation from the General Assembly, the facility must maintain a strong census to ensure an adequate revenue stream to remain viable and not to become a fiscal burden to the Commonwealth.

- Staffing

The Virginia Veterans Care Center strives to maintain consistent staffing levels in order to provide continuity and proper care to the veterans served. However, the care center faces four challenges in recruiting and retaining the workforce needed for the continued delivery of the highest levels of health care:

- The VVCC must compete with local hospitals and long-term care facilities for the support staff and nursing staff needed to care for residents. Competition in the area of wages, benefits, and working conditions for all staff in health care is especially strong, given the adjacent VA Medical Center and the close proximity of area hospitals and other long term care facilities. This environment exacerbates the problem of nursing recruitment and retention, as the nationwide pool of licensed nurses is dwindling.

- The VVCC must cope with high levels of staff turnover in some sections. Job functions with significantly high annual turnover rates are:

- Certified Nursing Assistants – 39%
- Licensed Practical Nurses – 53%
- Dietary Staff – 40%
- Housekeeping Staff – 96%

- Care Center staff members have accumulated significant balances of compensatory time and over-time, costing the VVCC \$52,800 in compensatory time payments and \$198,600 in over-time payments in FY05 for the four high-turnover job functions identified above.

- Difficulties in recruiting and retention have forced a reliance on the utilization of employees of temporary staffing agencies

The department believes that current staffing authorization levels are simply inadequate to support the continued delivery of quality health care. The department took over direct operation of the VVCC in 2003. Prior to this time, the facility was operated by a series of contractors. Operations, management, and human resource knowledge gained during the two years of state management point to the need to increase the

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VVCC's full-time equivalent (FTE) employee authorization level by 29 FTEs, from 225 to 254, as follows:

- Certified Nursing Assistants: increase of 25 positions (includes students)
- Licensed Practical Nurses – increase of 2 positions
- Dietary Aide – increase of 1 position
- Housekeeper – increase of 1 position

An example of the staffing problem can be illustrated by the problem of recruiting and retaining Certified Nursing Assistants. The VVCC is certified by the Commonwealth to conduct Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training classes, which in the past has provided the facility with well-trained caregivers. However, the currently authorized FTE level prohibits the VVCC from conducting these classes because there are no available FTE positions for the students. Increasing the VVCC's FTE authorization would allow CNA training classes to be held, improving the department's ability to recruit qualified staff.

Service Area Financial Summary

	<u>Fiscal Year 2007</u>		<u>Fiscal Year 2008</u>	
	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund
Base Budget	\$0	\$12,914,745	\$0	\$12,914,745
Changes To Base	\$0	\$701,255	\$0	\$701,255
SERVICE AREA TOTAL	\$0	\$13,616,000	\$0	\$13,616,000

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Service Area Objectives, Measures, and Strategies

Objective 43013.01

To maintain the highest practical facility census.

Because the Virginia Veterans Care Center does not receive a general fund appropriation, operating solely on non-general fund revenue generated by the facility, the VVCC must maintain a strong census to ensure an adequate revenue stream to remain viable and not to become a fiscal burden to the Commonwealth

The optimum annual occupancy percentage is 95% for the nursing care section and the 93% in the assisted living (domiciliary) unit

This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:

- Improve access to veterans services
- Maximize flow of federal dollars to meet the needs of Virginia's veterans

This Objective Has The Following Measure(s):

- **Measure 43013.01.01**

Nursing Care Section Occupancy Rate.

Measure Type: Outcome **Measure Frequency:** Monthly

Measure Baseline: The FY05 Nursing Care Section occupancy rate was 93%

Measure Target: 95% occupancy rate in the Nursing Care Section

Measure Source and Calculation:

VVCC Monthly Report. The Nursing Care Section Occupancy Rate is determined by dividing the actual number of patient days by the total number of patient days the VVCC is capable of providing

- **Measure 43013.01.02**

Domiciliary Care Section Occupancy Rate.

Measure Type: Outcome **Measure Frequency:** Monthly

Measure Baseline: The FY05 Domiciliary Care Section occupancy rate was 94%

Measure Target: 93% occupancy rate in the Domiciliary Care Section

Measure Source and Calculation:

VVCC Monthly Report. The Domiciliary Care Occupancy Rate is determined by dividing the actual number of patient days by the total number of patient days the VVCC is capable of providing

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- **Measure 43013.01.03**

Resident Satisfaction Survey with at least 90% of the responses "excellent" or "good".

Measure Type: Input

Measure Frequency: Every Six Months

Measure Baseline: In the June 2004 survey, which relied on a four-point rating scale (excellent, good, fair, and poor), 11 of 14 questions had at least 90% of the responses in the "excellent" or "good" categories

Measure Target: At least 90% of the responses to all questions on the Resident Satisfaction Survey should be in the "excellent" or "good" categories

Measure Source and Calculation:

A survey of VVCC residents or their responsible party (usually a family member) will be conducted, and an analysis performed to identify those factors that impact patient census levels

- **Measure 43013.01.04**

Number of inquiry/interest requests received by the VVCC Admissions Office.

Measure Type: Outcome

Measure Frequency: Every Six Months

Measure Baseline: New measure. Data collected in FY06 on the number of inquiry/interest requests received will serve as the baseline for this measure

Measure Target: 90% of responses receive an "excellent" or "good rating"

Measure Source and Calculation:

A survey of VVCC residents or their responsible party (usually a family member) will be conducted, and an analysis performed to identify those factors that impact patient census levels

Objective 43013.01 Has the Following Strategies:

- The department will continue its marketing efforts to ensure that Virginia veterans are aware of the health care services offered by the Virginia Veterans Care Center
- The department will closely monitor responses to the Resident Satisfaction Survey to identify improvement opportunities. The survey is a key indicator of how care center residents perceive the level of patient care they are receiving. If the quality of resident care is perceived to be low, the potential exists that residents will seek other long-term care solutions, impacting the VVCC's census. Also important is the role that word of mouth advertising plays a role in attracting new care center residents. As such, delivering quality care to current residents impacts recruitment efforts.

Objective 43013.02

To obtain adequate FTE position authorization.

Because the Virginia Veterans Care Center does not receive a general fund appropriation, operating solely on non-general fund revenue generated by the facility, the VVCC must maintain a strong census to ensure an adequate revenue stream to remain viable and not to become a fiscal burden to the Commonwealth. Delivering high quality patient care hinges on maintaining adequate staffing levels, something the VVCC lacks at present

This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:

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- Maximize flow of federal dollars to meet the needs of Virginia's veterans

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This Objective Has The Following Measure(s):

- **Measure 43013.02.01**

Amount (in \$) of compensatory time paid to VVCC employees.

Measure Type: Outcome

Measure Frequency: Monthly

Measure Baseline: The VVCC paid \$52,800 in compensatory time in FY05

Measure Target: Reduce amount (in \$) of compensatory time paid to VVCC employees by 50%

Measure Source and Calculation:

Data will be collected by the VVCC business office and the DVS payroll section

- **Measure 43013.02.02**

Amount (in \$) of overtime time paid to VVCC employees.

Measure Type: Outcome

Measure Frequency: Monthly

Measure Baseline: The VVCC paid \$198,600 in overtime in FY05

Measure Target: Reduce amount (in \$) of overtime paid to VVCC employees by 50%

Measure Source and Calculation:

Data will be collected by the VVCC business office and the DVS payroll section

- **Measure 43013.02.03**

Number of hours worked by employees of temporary staffing agencies.

Measure Type: Outcome

Measure Frequency: Monthly

Measure Baseline: Employees of temporary staffing agencies worked 28,244 hours in FY05

Measure Target: Reduce number of hours worked by employees of temporary staffing agencies by 50%

Measure Source and Calculation:

Data will be collected by the VVCC business office and the DVS payroll and human resources offices

- **Measure 43013.02.04**

Turnover rate of Certified Nursing Assistants.

Measure Type: Outcome

Measure Frequency: Annually

Measure Baseline: Certified Nursing Assistants had a 39% turnover rate in FY05

Measure Target: Reduce Certified Nursing Assistant turnover rate to less than 20% annually

Measure Source and Calculation:

Data will be collected by the VVCC business office and the DVS human resources office

- **Measure 43013.02.05**

Turnover rate of Licensed Practical Nurses.

Measure Type: Outcome

Measure Frequency: Annually

Measure Baseline: Licensed Practical Nurses had a 53% turnover rate in FY05

Measure Target: Reduce Licensed Practical Nurse turnover rate to less than 25% annually

Measure Source and Calculation:

Data will be collected by the VVCC business office and the DVS human resources office

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Objective 43013.02 Has the Following Strategies:

- The department will request authorization for 29 new FTE positions, including 25 Certified Nursing Assistant positions and 2 Licensed Practical Nurse positions
- If the additional CNA positions are approved, the VVCC will re-institute the CNA training program